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SUBJECT: INDIAN EMBASSY'S LOW EXPECTATIONS FOR PM VISIT
APRIL 25-26

REF: A. A) 05 TASHKENT 3347

[1](#)B. B) TASHKENT 699

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY DCM BRAD HANSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Indian PM Manmohan Singh will officially visit Tashkent on April 25-26 to talk with President Karimov and lay a wreath at the National World War II Memorial. According to Indian DCM B.M. Vinod Kumar, the GOI's expectations are very low for the visit, as this trip seems primarily to reciprocate Karimov's 2005 and three earlier visits to Delhi. The Uzbeks have made it known that they would like to sign new bilateral agreements-- without suggesting any up to now--rather than work on implementing existing ones. The Indians intend to raise business and visa concerns, as well as possibly offer expanded English language programs and training in public administration and good governance. Kumar stressed that democracy will also be raised, recognizing the GOU will likely use this visit in its continued PR campaign to highlight engagement with the world's largest democracy. The PM does not plan to lobby the "little guy" Karimov on India's desire to become a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Indian Prime Minister Singh will make an official visit to Tashkent on April 25 and 26, according to Indian DCM B.M. Vinod Kumar. President Karimov has visited India four times since 1991, the last time in 2005. Kumar told DCM that the Uzbeks have long been pressuring India for a reciprocal visit, as an Indian Prime Minister has not visited Uzbekistan since 1993. As Singh will be visiting Germany, he decided to transit on his return to Delhi and squeeze in some official meetings. The Trade and Commerce Minister will be with Singh in Germany, and may accompany the PM to Tashkent as well, although that has not been decided definitely. Kumar does not expect any Indian businessmen to accompany the PM. Singh is scheduled to lay a wreath at the National Memorial (honoring casualties of World War II and the Stalin era), meet with Karimov and other senior-level officials and attend a social function before returning to India on the evening of April 26. According to Kumar, the Indian Embassy is frustrated with the GOU, as it has yet to make concrete decisions about the official schedule. Kumar said that these decisions are all sent to the top, which significantly delays planning.

[1](#)3. (C) When the DCM asked Kumar what the Indian government hoped to accomplish during the visit, Kumar laughed and said

his own Foreign Ministry was asking him the same question. He indicated that India's expectations for the visit are very low. He said that democracy will definitely be an item for discussion, as will economic ties and visas. Kumar said that Uzbekistan and India have signed 55 bilateral agreements, though few have been implemented. He said that the GOI wants to use the visit to work on implementation, especially of those agreements between their respective Chamber of Commerces (ref A) and on visa liberalization to facilitate business travel. However, Kumar said, the Uzbeks seem far more interested in signing new agreements, though they have yet to suggest any. Kumar does not expect the leaders to sign any new defense or economic agreements during the visit.

Kumar also told the DCM he doubts Indian Airlines will resume its flights to Tashkent. Uzbek Air currently runs nearly daily flights from London, through Tashkent, to New Delhi or Amritsar and back. According to Kumar, the seats on this inexpensive flight are mostly filled by ethnic Indians residing in the UK and Canada.

¶4. (C) Asked whether the PM would raise democracy and human rights issues, Kumar said Indian officials always bring up democracy, stressing the need in Uzbekistan to develop democratic institutions. For some years India has been assisting in this effort by trying to build up institution-to-institution ties and offering public administration and good governance training in India. Kumar hinted the PM may offer expanded training opportunities in this area, as well as in English. The Indian side would prefer to send Indian English teachers to Uzbekistan as the most cost-effective way to teach the most Uzbeks, but the GOU prefers to send individual Uzbeks to India to study English. Kumar commented negatively on the English skills of some recent Uzbek military officers sent to India for training.

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¶5. (C) DCM queried Kumar whether the PM would raise with Karimov India's desire to become a full member of the SCO. Kumar laughed and said "no" that India at the right time would approach Russia and China. When the two big guys are on board, he said, the "little guys" like Karimov will get on board, too.

¶6. (C) Comment: It seems the Indian government has no real agenda for the Uzbekistan trip, other than to respond to a long-standing Uzbek request for an Indian PM to visit. The Indian Embassy is well aware that the Uzbeks will likely spin this visit to show Karimov embracing democracy by meeting with the leader of the largest democracy in the world. We will see if Karimov tells Singh that Western-style democracy violates the moral purity of Uzbeks (ref B), as he said when he recently visited South Korea.

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